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This attempt at a "newsletter" is being sent to former pupils of the 1963 intake to Drayton Manor Grammar School that I've renewed links with.

Please feel free to distribute copies to other former Draytonians that you may be in contact with.

An Apology

I had originally intended to compile a new edition of this **DMGS'63** "newsletter" back in 2002's "Autumn term". However, other activities intervened (one daughter graduating from Uni, and the younger starting her University course; a busy/hgctic project at work; a spot of ill health; etc.) and the task kept being put aside until I felt I had sufficient "spare time". Similarly, I've had little chance to add much to our web site (www.dmgs63.org.uk).

Hopefully, having finally put pen to paper (or fingers to keyboard...), this will be worth the wait.

That Was Reunion 2002...

Well, I don't know about other attendees, but I still have pleasant memories of that weekend back in July 2002 when I met up with some people that I hadn't seen for thirty years. I'm still impressed at how John Winnert managed to lay on the excellent sunny weather as we sat in his garden catching up with each other on the past three decades.

Of course, there are many thanks owed to Norma (John's wife) for the catering and refreshments.

Various comments were exchanged in e-mails as seen from the following extracts.

Tony Ryan said:

"Many thanks to John and certainly to Norma. Though you have held previous (but smaller) reunions, many thanks for putting up with a new load of strangers making themselves at home! It was a really good day and I enjoyed meeting up with so many 'old' faces after so many years.

Even my son enjoyed the day (weird kid)."

Evan Griffiths wrote:

"Thanks for hosting a thoroughly enjoyable weekend John, you and in particular Norma, deserve a medal for providing such a relaxed and convivial atmosphere for the reunion. It was really good to see people again after so many years and hopefully we will be able to keep in touch better than in the past. I shall certainly be looking out for Alan next time I'm in town. Once again many thanks"

From an Internet café in Greenford, Joe Jakubowski e-mailed:

"Dear John and Norma:
My great thanks also for making last Saturday's reunion possible and organizing such an outstanding event, it was unfortunate that I had to leave so early, needless to say I have remembered a number of old school things that I wanted to banter around but which escaped me at the time. It was unfortunate that Dave could not make it, I have not been successful in reaching him yet but will keep trying (I suppose this will reach him - you were widely missed Bisc.).

Hopefully this will become a regular event, unfortunately my location in Indianapolis is not really conducive to me being of much help - not that I could match the environs and hospitality.

Greetings again to all of you 50 year olds - must be tough being that age - although I must say that you all appeared to have aged quite well, must be the result of all of those care free days back at DMGS and the salubrious effect of moderate (!!) alcohol consumption.

I also wanted to acknowledge Allan for running such a great site which during some lurking alerted me to the reunion. Best wishes to everyone."

Phil Slade added his views:

"...enjoyed tremendously this year's event and have noted the date for 2003

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already! It was good to meet up with so many old classmates again, but with our young family it was difficult to spend enough time speaking to everyone. So, many thanks again for helping make all this happen. Finally, just to mention again, my French pen-friend from Drayton Manor visited us last week, once more. Surprising how things from that part of our lives still affects us, so many years later."

Not all the people we were in contact were able to attend, but they saw the various e-mails and photos. **Diane Barker (née Loader)** wrote:

"Thanks for the message. I really wanted to come but by the time I realised when it was I had already agreed to have my granddaughter for the day. I did think about coming on Sunday but didn't know how many people had stayed over. If you do it again next year (which I hope you will) I will really do my best to come. You all certainly seemed to have a good time, judging by the pictures – some people look just the same but some look so different I wouldn't know them in a month of Sundays."

Liz Simpson (née Cowell) wrote:

"I can't get over how you've managed to track so many '63 people down and I've loved reading all your news. Great stuff! I'm only sorry to have missed out on the July reunion which I would have definitely come to....had I been in the country. Since Linda (Wheeler) was there I expect she told you I was over staying with her in April, on a visit from Melbourne. We had the best time, and never once got lost for words – quite the opposite in fact. The bad part about living so far away is the loss of regular contact with old friends, although I think we made up for it over those few, fantastic days we had together."

And our reminiscences and photos on the web have resulted in contacts from other ex-Draytonians in other year groups, as I've received e-mails from **Ian Little, Andy Gamble** (brother of **Judith**) and **Sandie Higginbottom**. Sandie turns out to live in the Basingstoke area like myself; and through lurking on the DMGS'67 web site I discovered that my optician, **Andy Bonner** is another local ex-Draytonian!

Reunion 2003

The success of the 2002 get-together prompted the question about a follow-up event in 2003. (September 2003 will of course be, for most of us, the 40th anniversary of our first days at Drayton Manor).

Following the positive feedback on 2002, **John Winnert** has very kindly offered to host "**Old Draytonians - The Sequel**"!

As John wrote last year:

"My main concern is not any effort on my part required beforehand – I have the time and I am quite happy to sort that – it is the amount of work inevitably created for Norma. While she is happy to take this on and pleased to see everyone, you are, after all, my old school not hers!

However, I feel that if I organise the event slightly differently it should only create a tolerable amount of domestic disorder.

So, my suggested format would be to have the shared buffet lunch as last weekend, then seek some volunteers to get all the catering, etc., cleared up at the end of the afternoon(!) before heading off for the Alice Lisle for dinner (I've checked with them and they're confident they can cope with a very large block booking providing we can make it early rather than late evening).

Then, on the Sunday, a short walk on the forest, then lunch and a pint at the pub (probably the Alice Lisle again) as before.

That way, we're straight at the end of the Saturday afternoon rather than Norma still clearing up on the Monday!"

So, please be advised that Johan has confirmed the dates for the 2003 Reunion as

27th to 28th June 2003

(Note that these are changed from those previously announced).

I'm sure that John would appreciate a note regarding your interest in attending. Please feel free to drop him an e-mail at winnert@btinternet.com

Let's hope that John has picked dates that will enjoy the same glorious weather as last year. Who knows? We may see more people joining **Tim Dean** in the swimming pool! (And for those of you who didn't attend, Tim went in of his own accord!)

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I hope to find some time to add further extracts from **Phoenix** (the DMGS Magazine) to our web site before the next Reunion. Don't forget if you come across any interesting memorabilia from our days at Drayton Manor, get in touch and we'll see what we can do about adding it to the web site for the world to see.

I've also been toying with the idea of adding a "**1960s**" links page to the web site – to point to other web sites that may bring back memories of our schooldays. **Paul Curtis** alerted me to the **Radio Caroline** web site. Has anyone stumbled across any similar cyberspace archives?

That's about all I can think of to ramble on about for now. Again, apologies for the lack of communication over the last few months.

Keep in touch!

Allan Palmer

This newsletter is being sent by e-mail directly to:
Paul Curtis, John Blackwell, Sue Murrilo (Brown), Tim Dean, John Winnert, David Butcher, Janet Gibbons (Rogers), Peter Lockett, Dave Hutchinson, Sue Geary (Grimes), Allan Taylor, Lindsay Trevarthen (Churchill), Les Redford, Tony Ryan, Peter Durrans, Graham Reynolds, Janice Holley, Bernice Gregoriou (Clare), John McConnell, Patrick Lau, Craig Boxshall, David Carpenter, Brenda McCraith, Michael Beattie, Steve Hinton, Len Shilling, Dave Barker, Evan Griffiths, Graham Morris, Jane Barker, Joan Budgen (Beattie), Joe Jakubowski, Linda Gadson (Wheeler), Linda McCaig, Phil Slade, Steve Whittaker, Tim Dean, Ged Nolan.

I will also check through the Friends Reunited list to see if there are others to contact.

Please feel free to pass this missive onto any ex-Draytonian you may be in contact with.